TL176

Indonesian News

ISSUED BY THE INFORMATION DEPARTMENT, EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA ● 38 GROSVENOR SQUARE, LONDON W1X 9AD 071 - 499 7661

Vol 19, No.21 5 December 1991

SPECIAL ISSUE

SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS IN EAST TIMOR

Please inform us of any change of address

SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS IN EAST TIMOR

GENERAL FACTS

Timor is a small island situated in the south-eastern part of the Indonesian archipelago. The island and its people were artificially divided into two by the Dutch and Portuguese during the colonial era for more than 450 years. Like the rest of the Indonesian archipelago, the western part of the island of Timor was colonized by the Dutch. Only the eastern part of the island, known as East Timor, was under Portuguese domination.

After 350 years of subjugation, the population of the archipelago, including the western part of Timor, finally defeated the Dutch, and the independence of the Republic of Indonesia was declared in 1945. The eastern part of Timor, however, was still under Portuguese colonial rule.

Under the leadership of Spinola in April 1974, Portugal changed its policy on overseas colonies, including East Timor, and accorded the population the right to decide on their own political future through a referendum.

THE POLITICAL PARTIES

In response to Portugal's new policy, political parties emerged in East Timor from May 1974 onwards to channel the aspirations of the population. The referendum was scheduled to be held on 12 March, 1976. There were three major parties and two smaller ones. The political parties were :

a. <u>Uniao Democratica Timorese (UDT)</u>
Believed to have the strongest popular support, it aimed to form a special relationship with Portugal and to gradually lead East Timor to independence.

b. <u>Frente Revolucionaria De Timor Leste Independiente (FRETILIN)</u>
A party leaning towards communism, formed on 22 May, 1974 with the name of "Associacao Social Democratica de Timor", it changed its name four months after its formation, and on 28 November, 1975 against the will of the other parties as well as Portugal's Constitutional Law 7/75, declared the independence of the so-called "Democratic Republic of East Timor".

c. <u>Associacao Integraciacao De Timor Indonesia (APODETI)</u>
The APODETI's goal is indicated clearly by its name, that is, Independence through Integration with Indonesia.

d. Klibur Oan Timur Aswain (KOTA)
Its aim was to secure independence for East Timor and to preserve the authority of the "liurais" (the traditional political system and leadership).

e. The Trabalhista Party
The labour party sought an independent East Timor and to establish a special relationship with Portugal.

THE DECOLONIZATION PROCESS

1. The Portuguese Confusing Politics and Chaos

The frequent change of politics in Lisbon, coupled with FRETILIN policy brought confusion and eventually chaos to the decolonization process in East Timor. In November 1974, the newly installed Portuguese Governor of East Timor declared that decolonization should not be construed as implying a complete separation between Portugal and its overseas territories.

Witnessing the rapid growth of support for the APODETI and thus endangering its policy, Portugal quickly arranged a transfer of power to the UDT and FRETILIN. Immediately after the formation of the UDT-FRETILIN coalition on 22 January, 1975, the two parties issued a joint communique criticizing the APODETI.

The coalition, however, was short-lived. With the change of politics in Lisbon, the leftist Portuguese Government now supported the FRETILIN by rendering political support, and deliberately left the Portuguese army's standard NATO weapons for their convenient use. Encouraged by the help of the Portuguese colonial forces in East Timor (TROPAZ), the FRETILIN embarked on a campaign of terror and massacre with the aim of gaining sole control of the territory.

Members and supporters of the UDT and APODETI fled their homes and crossed the border to find refuge in neighbouring Indonesian West Timor. Denying reports of killing by the Portuguese army and the FRETILIN, the Governor of East Timor asserted that the deaths among UDT and APODETI supporters were the result of several accidents while crossing a swollen river into Indonesia.

In May 1975, the UDT requested the FRETILIN to dismiss informants of the TROPAZ from the leadership of the party, but this was ignored. Condemning the action and policy of the FRETILIN, the UDT left the coalition. Portugal's confusing policy had plunged East Timor into chaos.

2. The Macao Conference in June 1975

When civil war became imminent, Portugal approached Indonesia, it being the country that bordered East Timor, to discuss the situation. A meeting between the two governments was held in London in March 1975 in which the Portuguese Government agreed to alleviate the chaotic situation by arranging a conference between Portugal and the various political parties to devise a plan to implement a peaceful and orderly decolonization process.

At the request of the Portuguese, Indonesia persuaded the APODETI to attend the Conference.

When the Conference took place, the FRETILIN refused to participate and boycotted the meetings. As no consensus could be reached without FRETILIN participation, Portuguese representatives went on to hold separate hearings with the UDT and APODETI delegations.

Shortly after the conclusion of the Conference, Portugal promulgated Constitutional Law 7/75, setting forth the decolonization process in East Timor. The Law called for the formation of a Transitional Government to prepare for and hold in October 1976 the election of a Popular Assembly which would be responsible for determining the future status of East Timor.

The Transitional Government itself was to be composed of a High Commissioner appointed by Portugal, and five members : two as representatives of the Portuguese government and three chosen from the political parties.

3. The Civil War

The UDT and APODETI considered the FRETILIN's boycott of the Conference undemocratic and demanded that Portugal take disciplinary action over the FRETILIN boycott in line with Portuguese declared promises. The demand was ignored while the Head of the Political Affairs Department of the Governor continued his policy of replacing various chiefs of the District Administration and the District Council Administrators with TROPAZ members supporting the FRETILIN.

On 7 August, 1975, the UDT launched a strong protest and called on the Governor to remove two members of his security forces responsible for the policy. This request was rejected and the UDT called on the masses to stage a general strike. The strike demonstrated the massive support of the population for the UDT, and completely paralysed activities in East Timor.

Encouraged by the support of the people, UDT leaders on the second day of the strike called on the Governor to have talks, but it was learnt that the Governor had abandoned the

capital and gone to Los Palos. On the fourth day, the UDT announced that it had taken control, and called on the Governor and other parties to discuss the future of East Timor. As a result, the Governor sent the two members of the security forces back to Portugal, but the FRETILIN remained adamant and refused to join the discussion.

On 19 August, 1975, together with members of the Portuguese army, the FRETILIN launched an attack to seize Dili from the UDT. A week later, the Portuguese administration left Dili for the island of Atauro, outside the Dili harbour. A few weeks later, the Governor together with his officials and troops abandoned East Timor completely, leaving behind all their weapons and heavy artillery for FRETILIN use.

The abandonment left the population with no central authority to establish order. The UDT, APODETI, KOTA and Trabalhista joined forces to fight the FRETILIN, and they all saw the flight of the Portuguese authorities as leaving them on their own to assume responsibility over East Timor. Civil war broke out.

It is interesting to note that the same pattern of Portuguese policy occurred in Mozambique and Angola. The only difference was that in East Timor, the party favoured by the Portuguese was defeated during the civil war by the other parties.

4. Indonesian Policy

From the very beginning, Indonesia openly declared that it had no territorial ambitions in East Timor or elsewhere. Following a meeting in Jakarta with Ramos Horta (a representative of the ASDT or the FRETILIN) in June 1974, the Indonesian Foreign Minister stressed the Indonesian policy of non-interference in the domestic politics of other countries and stated that Indonesia would support the independence of East Timor should it be the wish of its people.

In response to the visit of Dr. Santos (Portuguese Minister for Interterritorial Coordination) in October 1974, who said that it would be unrealistic to establish an independent East Timor, President Suharto lucidly reiterated that since Indonesia was opposed to colonialism as clearly sanctioned in its constitution, it would only accept the integration of Portuguese Timor if this was the wish of the population, and on the condition it was accepted that the territory would become part of the Indonesian unitary state in accordance with Indonesian constitution. The same message had earlier been conveyed to the visiting Chairman of the APODETI in August 1974.

During the civil war, Indonesia again stressed to the visiting Dr. Santos in August and September 1975 that it harboured no territorial ambitions in Portuguese Timor, and recognized Portugal as the sole authority in East Timor. Indonesia also expressed its hope that Portugal would restore peace and implement an orderly decolonization process in East Timor.

Pursuant to the understanding reached by Indonesia and Portugal on the necessity to restore order in East Timor, and in the light of Portugal's difficulties in putting an end to the civil war, Indonesia on 29 August, 1975 proposed the formation of an international "Joint Authority", composed of officials from Portugal, Australia, Malaysia and Indonesia, with the function of administering the territory until Portuguese authority was re-established. The proposal to set up an international authority to help Portugal re-establish its administrative power clearly demonstrated Indonesia's sincere desire to bring peace conducive to the implementation of an orderly decolonization process in East Timor. Unfortunately, Portugal chose to completely abandon East Timor.

5. The Process of Integration

Given the facts that Portugal had failed to implement a peaceful and orderly decolonization process, and stressing that the people of East Timor had strong ethnic and cultural links with the Indonesians, especially those in West Timor, the leaders of the UDT, KOTA and Trabalhista signed a petition on 7 September, 1975 in the border town of Batugade in East Timor, declaring their desire to achieve independence through the integration of East Timor with Indonesia.

The petition was received on 15 September, 1975 by Indonesia and the following day, President Soeharto declared that while the Government of Indonesia welcomed the petition, it was the considered opinion of the Government that the integration should be based upon the result of the exercise of the right of self-determination by the people of East Timor.

The Indonesian Foreign Minister also declared that Indonesia would only hold discussions with Portugal as the administering power in East Timor, and that it would not participate in talks with the representatives of any faction, and urged the Portuguese government to restore order. Indonesia also requested the Portuguese government to discuss the problem of the East Timorese refugees who were pouring in their thousands into Indonesian West Timor.

On the initiative of the Portuguese Foreign Minister, a meeting was held with the Indonesian Foreign Minister in Rome on 1 November, 1975. The two ministers issued a joint

press communique stating their agreement that the fundamental responsibility for the decolonization of East Timor lay with Portugal, and that peace and order should be restored so as to enable its people to freely decide their own future. To this end, they also agreed on the necessity to convene a meeting between Portugal and all the political parties, aimed at ending armed conflict and bringing about a peaceful and orderly process of decolonization to East Timor.

The UDT expressed its readiness to meet the Portuguese government as long as the representatives of the other parties in the territory were also ready to participate. They wanted to make sure that the experience at the Macao Conference would not happen again. The UDT then warned that to hand over power to the FRETILIN unilaterally would mean the continuation of the civil war.

In fulfilling Indonesia's promise, the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Adam Malik, persuaded the UDT and APODETI on 8 November, 1975 to join Portugal in implementing the Rome Agreement. On November 19, it was learnt that the FRETILIN was also willing to discuss with the other parties matters relating to the future of East Timor.

It was during this encouraging development to find a peaceful settlement that on 28 November, 1975, the FRETILIN betrayed the people's trust and destroyed the conducive atmosphere by unilaterally issuing a "Declaration of Independence" of East Timor and announcing the formation of the "Democratic Republic of East Timor". Two days later in Balibo, East Timor, the UDT and the APODETI who were then joined by the KOTA and Trabalhista made a counter-declaration by proclaiming "independence through integration" with the Republic of Indonesia. The combined forces of the UDT, APODETI, KOTA and Trabalhista then seized Dili from the FRETILIN and set up the "Provisional Government of East Timor" on 7 December, 1975.

When normalty was restored, the Provisional Government held an election to set up the "People's Assembly", composed of representatives from all districts in East Timor. The decolonization process was implemented in accordance with the concept proposed by Portugal as set out in its Constitutional Law 7/75 following the Macao Conference.

In an open session on 31 May, 1976, the duly elected representatives of the People's Assembly of East Timor made a formal request to the Government of Indonesia to accept the decision of the people of East Timor to integrate with Indonesia. This session was attended by foreign journalists and members of the diplomatic corps. On 7 June, 1976 a delegation of the People's Assembly presented the request to the President of Indonesia.

The President instructed the Indonesian Government to dispatch a fact-finding mission to determine whether the request genuinely represented the wishes of the people. The President also instructed the Minister for Foreign Affairs to request the Provisional Government to invite the United Nation's Secretary-General, the Security Council and the Committee of 24 to send observers together with the fact-finding team. Unfortunately there was no response to the invitation.

Urged by the Timorese and encouraged by a positive report from the fact-finding mission, the President proposed a bill to the House of Representatives concerning the integration of East Timor with the Republic of Indonesia. In his State Address on 16 August, 1976, the President said that : "Time and again we have stated that the East Timor problem is a question of self-determination. It is a problem of abolishing colonialism. The fate of the people of East Timor can only be decided by they themselves and right there on the soil of East Timor. Not in New York, not in Lisbon and not even in Jakarta." With the approval of the House, the Bill was signed into law on 17 July, 1976. As from this date, to the majority of the East Timorese and to Indonesia, the decolonization process had ended in accordance with the United Nation Resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV).

THE EAST TIMOR QUESTION IN THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations Secretary-General appointed Mr. Guicciardi as his special representative in December 1975 to assess the situation in East Timor. At the beginning, the Provisional Government of East Timor was reluctant to involve the United Nations in the decolonization process they were trying to implement. They pointed out that Principle IX (b) of Resolution 1541 (XV) stated that the United Nations could, when it was deemed necessary, supervise the decolonization process, and they thus concluded that whilst United Nations' participation was important, it was not mandatory.

More important, they argued that throughout its membership in the United Nations, Portugal had maintained that East Timor was not a colonial territory, but its overseas province, and therefore the provisions of Chapter XI of the United Nations Charter as well as Resolution 1514 (XV) concerning the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples could not be applied with regard to East Timor. Naturally, they were surprised to see that Portugal had turned to the United Nations and were at the same time suspicious due to the fact that Portugal had not requested the United Nations' involvement from the very beginning but had done so only after the defeat of the FRETILIN in East Timor. They therefore came to the conclusion

that it was just a desperate attempt by the Portuguese to save face after seriously bungling the decolonization process, and a ploy to help the FRETILIN in its comeback.

Indonesia, however, from the very outset believed that the United Nations should play a role in the decolonization process. It therefore persuaded the Provisional Government of East Timor to change its attitude and receive Mr. Gucciardi who had arrived in Jakarta on 15 January, 1976 to begin his mission. It was after this intervention that the Provisional Government allowed Mr. Gucciardi to visit East Timor on 20-22 January, 1976.

Unfortunately, the visit was inconclusive. Although Mr. Gucciardi was able to visit several districts, travel to others was not possible due to the lack of proper facilities. The Portuguese had not built even the most basic infrastructure during their 450 years of colonial domination of East Timor. When they abandoned East Timor, there were only 12 km of asphalted road, all in Dili. Mr. Gucciardi was also unable to visit the territory which FRETILIN claimed to control and had promised to take him to. Although the Portuguese Government offered a frigate to transport Mr. Gucciardi from Darwin, the visit could not be made because FRETILIN representatives were unable to point out a definite landing place for the mission. Mr. Gucciardi then reported to the United Nations that under the circumstances, it was impossible for him to make an accurate assessment of the situation in East Timor.

When the Provisional Government was preparing to carry out the self-determination process, it sent cables to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Gucciardi, the President of the Security Council, the Chairman of the Special Committee on Decolonization, and the Government of Indonesia, inviting them all to witness the election of the members of the People's Assembly. Having had no response, the Provisional Government sent a delegation to New York and Geneva with the sole purpose of meeting with and inviting the relevant United Nations' officials. Unfortunately, all its efforts were of no avail. Nevertheless, despite its disappointment, the Provisional Government never failed to report each and every step it took to implement the decolonization process as scheduled.

It was against this background that Indonesia was surprised to find that the majority of the members of the United Nations in 1975 overwhelmingly supported Portugal. Indonesia later realized that it had become the victim of Portugal's disinformation tactics of tailoring data to suit its purpose. Thus, when the United Nations considered the Portuguese draft resolution deploring the so-called Indonesian invasion and called for the self-determination process to be carried out in East Timor, only 10 nations supported Indonesia by rejecting that resolution, while 72 voted for the resolution.

As the years went by, and more facts as well as objective reports became available, many members changed their votes and gave their support to Indonesia. By 1982, Portugal's support was greatly

reduced to 50 votes, the support to Indonesia increased to 48 while the rest chose to stay neutral. The Portuguese resolution was nearly defeated. The United Nations' Human Rights Commission in Geneva also ceased to question the self-determination process in East Timor.

In 1983, the then new Secretary-General of the United Nations, Javier Perez de Cuellar requested Indonesia and Portugal to allow him to mediate and to solve the question peacefully rather than through voting. Out of respect to the United Nations, and in particular the Secretary-General, Indonesia accepted this proposal on the condition that the result of the self-determination process of May 1976 would not be violated. The Portuguese also accepted the request since there was a chance that its resolution could be defeated if they pushed it through voting in the United Nations' General Assembly.

After four years of tripartite negotiations, the Secretary-General proposed a package which was agreed at ambassadorial level. The package called for a Portuguese mission to visit several provinces in Indonesia, including East Timor, during the Indonesian General Election. After a three-month wait, Portugal called off the agreement.

A new round of negotiations was again conducted. This time it was agreed that the Portuguese Parliament would send a mission to East Timor commencing on 2 November 1991. It was also agreed that both sides could bring national journalists, apart from other journalists, foreign or otherwise, who wanted to cover the mission themselves. On the proposal of the Secretary-General, it was agreed that each side could bring six foreign journalists on the condition that either side could raise an objection to any of the foreign journalists. It was also agreed that prior informal discussions on the names of the foreign journalists was mandatory before they were formally communicated to the other side.

When Portugal forwarded the names of the journalists it wished to include on the mission, Indonesia had difficulties with three names, Ms. Jill Jollife, an Australian national, who had long been regarded as an anti-Indonesian crusader, and two Portuguese journalists Mr. Rui Araujo and Mr. Mario Robalo, in view of the fact that they had been engaged in activities inconsistent with their journalistic functions when they visited East Timor in 1989 and in August 1991 respectively. Pursuant to the agreement made by both sides, Indonesia dropped its reservations about the two Portuguese journalists, but not about Ms. Jollife.

To the surprise of all, on 26 October, 1991, Portugal brought the issue to the attention of the press and announced the suspension of the mission on the pretext that Indonesia had committed "a serious violation of the fundamental principles of the right to inform and be informed". When it made the announcement, Portugal was not only guilty of concealing the fact that the Indonesian position on the matter was based on the agreed arrangements made under the auspices of the Secretary-General, but also of violating the rule of

confidentiality agreed by both sides as well as lacking the decency to inform the Secretary-General before making its decision and the announcement.

It is now clear that Portugal, having bungled the process of decolonization in East Timor, was and still is more interested in treating the issue of East Timor as a public relations exercise rather than in finding a solution satisfactory to all.

ISSUES IN FOCUS

1. The Atrocities

Disinformation tactics and fabricated stories have created the image that Indonesia is guilty of atrocities in East Timor. It is often stated that the atrocities are the result of the alleged Indonesian invasion in December 1975. However, those who are well-informed about the matter will point out that the atrocities were carried out by the FRETILIN before and during the civil war. The war started in August 1975 when Portugal irresponsibly abandoned East Timor and left its NATO standard weapons to be conveniently used by the FRETILIN in the war. Thus, the killings took place long before the so-called Indonesian intervention in December 1975.

It can be recalled that on 15 February, 1976, an Indonesian Red Cross team was taken by villagers, all witnesses of the massacre, to Aileu, the former site of the FRETILIN's headquarters. In the immediate area alone there were three mass graves, whilst another mass grave was found in Same.

2. The Famine

Indonesian armed forces have been accused of using chemical weapons and tactics creating famine in East Timor to subjugate the population. These accusations and rumours dissipated when it was found that Indonesia did not possess chemical weapons, being one of the few countries which has adhered to 1928 Geneva Protocol on Chemical Weapons without any reservation-- meaning that Indonesia will not use chemical weapons even if attacked with such weapons.

The accusations and rumours also receded when the world learnt that Portugal had neglected the development of East Timor during its 450 years of colonial domination, and that tens of thousands of East Timorese had fled for safety to Indonesian West Timor to escape famine and the FRETILIN's terrorism during the civil war.

For the record, when Portugal abandoned East Timor in August 1975, there were only 12 km of asphalted road all in Dili, and 92% of the population were illiterate. For the 750,000

people of East Timor, Portugal built only one Senior High School, two Junior High Schools and some Elementary Schools. Some of the Elementary Schools offered four years of education, but these schools were only provided for a certain group of people favoured by the colonial Government. The rest of the population were given only two years of elementary education. Thus, illiteracy reached as high as 92%.

3. The Alleged Indonesian Invasion and Annexation

Time and again, Indonesia has reiterated that it has never harboured any territorial ambitions in East Timor or elsewhere. Had Indonesia wanted to annex East Timor, it would have been more sensible to do so during the regimes of Caetano and Salazar when no one would have objected. But it was never in the foreign policy of Indonesia to annex or colonize another people. In fact, Indonesia actively sought ways for Portugal to re-establish its authority after it abandoned East Timor, and reiterated its request to Portugal to implement the decolonization process peacefully and justly.

4. The Role of the Military in East Timor

There have also been accusations that members of the Indonesian Security Forces embarked on a policy of intimidation in East Timor. The truth of the matter is that the military was and still is carrying out "Civic Mission" throughout Indonesia, including East Timor.

The Civic Mission is a unique manifestation of the close relationship between the military and the population of the villages where those members of the armed forces lived. In this mission, the military during their off duty hours act as an agent of development by offering their expertise, time and energy, in the building of roads, bridges, houses and schools as well as in various activities in the field of agriculture. Such missions have been carried out by Indonesia's military since the days of the Indonesian Independence Revolution against the Dutch in 1940s.

In East Timor, this mission has accelerated the development of the province. Compared with conditions at the time Portugal abandoned East Timor after 450 years of domination, the conditions during the last 16 years, inter alia, are as follows :

	Under Portuguese Colonial Rule	After Integration With Indonesia
Asphalted Road	12 Km, only in Dili	425 Km, throughout the Province
Kindergartens	None	13 have been established
Elementary Schools	A handful with 2 and 4 years of education	547 schools with 6 years of education
Junior High Schools	2	90
Senior High Schools	1	41
Universities	None	3
Hospitals	2	10
Health Centres	14	197
Village Clinics	None	674
Churches	100	518

Against the background of 450 years of Portuguese colonial exploitation and neglect, the people have naturally welcomed such civic missions. It has been reported that the population of several villages, having greatly benefited from by the mission, requested the Government not to reassign a battalion which had completed its tour of duty in the area. This was, however, unfortunate for the FRETILIN, because the mission alienated them from the population and the population even regarded the FRETILIN as troublemakers sowing provocation among the population whenever they could.

As guerrilla war cannot be won without the support of the population, members of the FRETILIN have quickly dwindled to no more than 150. It is for this reason that the FRETILIN and their sympathizers have tried to denigrate the Indonesian army through disinformation techniques hoping that the international community will press Indonesia to pull the army out of the villages.

Having been defeated in rural areas, it is now suspected that the FRETILIN are moving to and resuming their activities in the capital city of Dili, in order to stir up trouble and embarrass the Government by influencing and inciting the newly educated young people who unfortunately are still jobless, as was seen in the incident on 12 November, 1991.

CONCLUSION

Portugal has completely bungled the decolonization process in East Timor. Through disinformation tactics and fabricated stories, Portugal, the FRETILIN and their sympathizers have embarked on a public relation exercise to create the image that Indonesia is guilty of atrocities in East Timor and, thus, distract the attention of the international community from objective and balanced reports.

Indonesia, as well as countries in the West, was seriously concerned in 1975 that the FRETILIN would create a communist country of East Timor. The FRETILIN nearly did so by unilaterally declaring the independence of the "Democratic Republic of East Timor", which was opposed by the four other East Timorese parties. However, the integration of East Timor into the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia is a result of the decolonization process in accordance with the United Nations Resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV), and not of annexation.

Portugal tried to challenge that very fact in the United Nations, and due to its disinformation tactics, managed to gain support. As the years went by and more facts as well as objective reports became available, many members changed their votes and gave their support to Indonesia. By 1982, the Portuguese Resolution was nearly defeated. It was at this time that Indonesia, out of respect to the United Nations' Secretary-General, accepted his request to allow him to mediate and solve the question peacefully rather than through voting. The United Nations' General Assembly has since then deferred consideration of East Timor.

TOTAL P.15
1999-03-08 13:10 PAGE = 15